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ABSTRACT

The frequency of sexually harassing behaviors in a high school setting were examined in this study; differences with regard to gender, level of coercion, and perceptions of what is, or is not, sexual harassment are also addressed. The implication of this study is that sexual harassment is likely to occur frequently, even in secondary schools. Although there is no unambiguous definition of sexual harassment, for the purposes of this study, it may be hypothesized as follows: any time a students grade or advancement is contingent upon the acceptance of sexual remarks or favors, sexual harassment is operating in the educational environment. Subjects consisted of 192 college students (113 female, 79 male) at Middle Tennessee State University. Participants were asked to complete the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ) while they reflected on experiences during their high school years. Results indicated that more than three-fourths of the subjects had experienced some form of sexual harassment. Many, however, apparently did not know that they behavior they described was classified as such. A significant portion of the students reported experiencing behaviors typically thought of as sexual harassment, yet they denied being "sexually harassed." It seemed that males were harassed at a similar rate as females, with males experiencing more verbal types of sexual harassment (sexual remarks and jokes). Females tended to be subjected to more staring behavior than their male peers. The implication of this study is that sexual harassment is likely to occur frequently, even in secondary schools. (Contains 18 references and 1 table.) (RJM)

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS

The purpose of this study was to assess the frequency of sexually harassing behaviors in a high school setting. In addition, differences with regard to gender, level of coercion, and perceptions of what is or is not sexual harassment were addressed. The implication of this study is that sexual harassment is likely to occur frequently, even in secondary schools. The basic lack of research in this area provides an adequate justification for this research. Subjects consisted of 192 college students who presently attend Middle Tennessee State University. Participants were asked to complete the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald et al., 1988) while reflecting on experiences during their high school years. The Mantel Haenszel chi square was used to assess the frequency differences between males and females. No consistent differences were found on any of the subscales of the SEQ, $p < .05$. Main-s, however, did report experiencing sexual remarks and jokes as well as some forms of sexual bribery more often than females. Females tended to be subjected to more staring behavior than their male peers. McNemar's test of dependent proportions was also conducted to test for differences in the frequency of sexual harassment as related to the level of coercion involved. It was found that the less coercive forms of sexual harassment are the most prevalent, $p < .005$. Finally, McNemar's test was also conducted to assess the difference in those who report being sexually harassed and those who acknowledge experiencing behaviors that are generally regarded as sexual harassment.

The results were significant in that those who admitted experiencing such behaviors did not necessarily call them "sexual harassment", $p < .05$. Thus, sexual harassment continues to be a prevalent factor in the secondary school system.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment has increasingly become an issue of concern within the last twenty years. From the workplace, to the social scene, to the academic setting, sexual harassment has continued to profoundly affect men and women throughout the United States (Dziech & Weiner, 1990; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Popovich, Licata, Nokovich, Martelli, & Zoloty, 1986; Roscoe, Goodwin, Repp, & Rose, 1987). Research has suggested that anywhere from 20 to 60% of females (Barak, Fisher, & Houston, 1992; Dziech & Weiner, 1990; Fitzgerald et al., 1988) and 2 to 70% of males (American Association of University Women, 1993; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Roscoe et al., 1987) have experienced some form of sexual harassment.

One of the problems involved in the study of sexual harassment has been the inability to agree upon a standard definition for what constitutes sexual harassment (Dziech & Weiner, 1990; Hotelling, 1991; Somers, 1982; Terpstra & Baker, 1987). In addition, there is some ambiguity regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment. This ambiguity may be due, in part, to the lack of agreement regarding what sexual harassment actually is. Somers (1982) stated that sexual harassment can range from verbal threats to physical assault and often includes a power differential or some form of coercion. She defined this concept as occurring "when sexual language or behavior threatens the ability of students to participate and benefit freely from that environment" (p. 31). Similarly, Fitzgerald (1990) has suggested that sexual harassment consists of the sexualization of an instrumental relationship through the introduction or imposition of sexist or sexual remarks, requests or requirements, in the context of a formal power differential. Harassment can also occur where no such formal differential exists, if the behavior is unwanted by or offensive to the woman. Instances of harassment can be classified into the following general categories: gender harassment, seductive behavior, solicitation of sexual activity by promise of reward or threat of punishment, and sexual imposition or assault. (p. 38)

In this definition, it is the power difference as well as the reaction of the victim that constitutes sexual harassment. Finally, however, the seemingly most accepted and most frequently used definition of sexual harassment comes from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 1980). These guidelines state that unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment (p. 74677).

This definition is not only suitable for the workplace but also the educational environment. It may be hypothesized that any time a student's grade or advancement is contingent upon the acceptance of sexual remarks or favors, sexual harassment is operating. Therefore, this definition was deemed suitable for this proposed research. According to the Educator's Guide to Controlling Sexual Harassment (Sandler, 1994), sexual harassment in academia may take many forms. In addition, it is not only perpetrated by teachers, but by students as well. On the surface, peer harassment may appear to be lacking the power differential that is present in many of the definitions. It has been stated, however, that "power can be derived from acceptance by certain friendship

groups; inclusion may require going along with harassing behaviors from a popular classmate or colleague" (Sandler, 1994, p. 16). This type of harassment may be typically brushed off as a "boys will be boys" type of behavior. In a study commissioned by the American Association of University Women (AAUW, 1993), a research commission surveyed over 1600 public school students from grades 8 through 11. Eighteen percent reported that they had been sexually harassed by a school employee (teacher, bus driver, etc.). Seventy-nine percent, however, stated that they had been harassed by another student (current or former). Thus, the perpetrators of sexual harassment vary greatly.

Although a working definition of sexual harassment has been difficult to ascertain, it is generally agreed upon that certain behaviors do constitute sexual harassment (McCormack, 1985; Sandler, 1994; Terpstra & Baker, 1987). Sexual jokes, sexually suggestive gestures, whistling, exposing one's genitals to another, brushing against another, coarse language, and frequent unwanted propositions can all be said to equal sexual harassment in a given context. This is true with regard to both peer and teacher-student sexual harassment. Till (as cited in Fitzgerald et al., 1988) has divided sexual harassment into five categories based on the level of coercive force involved. The least coercive form, gender harassment, involves sexist remarks and behaviors. Seductive behavior includes inappropriate sexual advances that are free of rewards or punishments. At a more forceful level is sexual bribery in which sexual activity is solicited using rewards. Sexual coercion, the next level, involves the solicitation of sexual activity using threats or punishments. The final, most coercive form of sexual harassment using Till's categories is sexual assault. This involves forced sexual contact or imposition. Again, it is the unwanted nature of the act that creates the hostile environment and, thus, sexual harassment. However, it may be suggested that even behavior that is desired by the student may be inappropriate with this age group.

According to Dziech and Weiner (1990), sexual harassment is not necessarily difficult to recognize. According to these authors, in the vast majority of cases, it appears to be an explicit, annoying behavior that is sexual in nature and leads to a considerable amount of discomfort in its victims. They further state that in an educational setting, it involves a decision on the part of a teacher or professor to change the norms and roles of a given situation violate one's professional ethics with regard to teaching. Finally, it has been stated that students' rights in this area are protected under Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, which forbids discrimination on the basis of sex against students and employees in all federally assisted programs in all public and private institutions that receive federal monies through grants, loans, or contracts. (Somers, 1982, p. 24). Thus, sexual harassment is considered a form of sex discrimination.

PREVALENCE BY GENDER

In the workplace as well as academia, many studies have focused on the differences between males and females with regard to the frequency of sexual harassment. As a general rule, females have reported a significantly higher number of sexually harassing experiences than males (AAUW, 1993; Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Popovich et al., 1986; Roscoe et al., 1987).

Popovich et al. (1986) found that females tended to report such harassing behaviors as being looked up and down, asked for dates, and treated as sex objects significantly more often than did male raters. In contrast, more than females did appear to report sexual remarks and jokes as well as staring behavior. This study, however, only assessed harassment in the workplace. Thus, although the subjects were undergraduate students, no mention was made of sexual harassment in an academic setting.

Roscoe et al. (1987) did report the frequency of sexual harassment that was experienced in a college setting. In this study, 28% of females and 12% of males stated that they had experienced behaviors generally thought to be sexually harassing in nature. More females reported being the target of harassment by school employees, and for both sexes, the less blatant forms of sexual harassment (verbal sexual advances, propositions, etc.) were the most prevalent. In contrast, only 8% of females and 5% of males surveyed reported that they had ever been sexually harassed. It appears that although these students acknowledged what had happened to them, many obviously did not know how to classify it.

The results of the study by Fitzgerald et al. (1988) were quite different. Upon sampling over 2500 university students, the authors found that only 5% of the females and 2% of males reported any harassing experiences. Thus, fewer students endorsed items relevant to sexually harassing behaviors than in the study by Roscoe et al. (1987). Men, in general, were described as "quite unlikely to be harassed" (p. 172).

Finally, Fischer and Good (1994) obtained results suggesting even fewer sexually harassing experiences. In this study, sex bias, discrimination, and harassment were considered as separate entities. With regard to the harassment of 635 upper level undergraduate students, few differences were found based on gender. In addition, very few students reported either experiencing sexual harassment or knowing others who had experienced such behavior that was perpetrated by college professors or employees. Thus, few people of either gender reported being sexually harassed in an academic setting.

These discrepancies in the findings which assess the frequency of sexually harassing behaviors experienced by males and females suggest that further research is needed in this area. Studies by Popovich et al. (1986) and Roscoe et al. (1987) failed to address whether or not a well researched, reliable instrument was used in the measurement of sexual harassment. Fischer and Good (1994) reported an internal consistency finding of .81 for their questionnaire. No mention was made, however, of any reliability or validity studies regarding their surveys.

In addition, none extended the scope of their research beyond college students and into other sectors of the educational system. Finally, based upon these studies, the general trend of the research appears to indicate that sexual harassment may be decreasing somewhat. Later studies appear to have found fewer cases of sexual harassment. This could be relevant (as a result of the emphasis placed on its prevention), or it may be due to the different instruments and definitions used with regard to measuring sexual harassment. Regardless of the reasons for the results, these conflicting findings suggest further research is necessary with regard to not only gender differences but also frequencies in general.

HIGH SCHOOL

Probably the most neglected area involving research on sexual harassment has been its assessment with regard to high school students. All but a few of the studies concerning sexual harassment in academia have involved the use of college students and the assessment of harassment on college campuses. Very little research has addressed the frequency of sexual harassment displayed in high school classrooms. Winks (1982) has suggested that there is a conspiracy of silence with regard to the sexual harassment of high school students. Students, masking their disapproval with worldly wise cynicism, shrug off such behavior as just another variation of teacher's pet.

Administrators avoid confrontations in the fervent hope that parents remain uninformed. Students, teachers, administrators – all participate in the conspiracy of silence. (p. 4381)

A few exceptions to this generalization have been evidenced. McCormack (1985) reported that approximately 38% of those who had experienced some form of sexual harassment had undergone such behaviors at the secondary school level. Thirty-eight out of 101 experiences were reported as occurring at or before the high school level. In addition, McCormack (1985) stated that no certain kind of sexually harassing experience could be found more at one level of schooling than another. Comments intended to embarrass a student, looks meant to undress, physical contact, and coercion leading into a sexual relationship were all present regardless of educational level. Thus, each were present whether one experienced such behaviors in junior high school, high school, or college.

A second exception is found in the work of Wishnietsky (1991). Although this study did attempt to measure the extent of unethical relationships between high school students and teachers, half of the data were obtained by surveying school superintendents. The remainder of the data were obtained from recent high school graduates. The low response rate for both groups (especially the administrators) may be indicative of a reluctance on their part to answer questions dealing with such a sensitive issue. Those who did respond to Wishnietsky's study may be the ones who have not experienced or detected a significant rate of sexual harassment and, thus, are not uncomfortable with its discussion. In Wishnietsky's study, the superintendents who responded reported only 26 incidents of teachers being reprimanded for sexual harassment during a three-year period. When students from these school systems were sampled, however, 90 incidents were reported. It appears that many of the actual harassing experiences were not reported or acknowledged.

In a similar vein, Corbett, Gentry, and Pearson (1993) found that 54% of the subjects believed that they had experienced sexual harassment "almost never" while in high school. Forty percent said that it only happened occasionally, and 58% of the respondents did not believe that sexual harassment was a serious problem in their high schools. In contrast, half of these subjects provided examples of such behaviors occurring between peers and their teachers. In addition, with regard to those encounters reported between a student and teacher in high school, most students stated that this type of incident was not always inappropriate and, in fact, thought that a teacher and student could participate in a mutually consenting sexual relationship in spite of differences in age as well as stature. This may be evidence of the fact that students may deny the existence of sexual harassment if it is stated as such (as opposed to when stated in behavioral terms). However, Corbett et al. (1993) failed to report how their measurement was taken (broad based or behaviorally oriented). In addition, no mention was made as to whether or not the instrument was well researched, reliable, or valid. It appears that measurement was likely based on a somewhat vague definition of sexual harassment.

The final research found concerning the sexual harassment of secondary school students was the AAUW study (1993). An overwhelming 85% of females and 76% of males reported that they had encountered unwanted sexual behaviors during school. However, this behavior was found to be less frequently occurring for males than for females. The harassment came from both teachers and other students. Most of the students who reported such incidents stated that the harassment had begun in the junior high years. In addition, the most frequently reported behaviors included sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks as well as touching or grabbing in a sexual way. Eleven percent reported being forced to engage in a sexual activity other than kissing. Based on this, nearly 1 in 4 students reported difficulties in school following the harassment. Such problems included not wanting to go to school, not wanting to participate in class, inattention, and falling grades. This was true for 33% of females as compared to 12% of males. Although this study provided much needed research, the authors failed to report reliability, validity, or internal consistency findings regarding the instrument

used in the measurement of sexual harassment. In addition, no measures with regard to the level of coercion involved or perceptions of sexual Harassment were included as in the study by Fitzgerald et al. (1988).

RATIONALE

Based on the results of these studies, the sexual harassment of high school students appears to exist (AAUW, 1993; Corbett et al., 1993; McCormack, 1985; Winks, 1982; Wishnietsky, 1991). Not only does teacher-student harassment appear to be prevalent, but peer to peer sexual harassment is reported at a much higher rate than teacher-student sexual harassment. Eighty-six percent of girls as well as 71% of boys in the AAUW study (1993) reported being sexually harassed by either a present or former student. Thus, although the results of this study may be somewhat tentative based on the lack of reporting of the researcher's methods, it does suggest the need for further inquiries. Only a few research efforts have investigated the actual frequency of sexual harassment with this type of sample. In addition, the sexual harassment of male students has historically been all but dismissed and ignored. Thus, research must assess the frequency of differences regarding males and females. In addition, knowing the types of sexual harassment that occur with this population as well as how it is would be desirable. Only then will appropriate modifications such as informative programs be justified.

The proposed research will attempt to examine the frequencies of sexual harassment in high schools. In addition, gender differences as well as differences in the frequency of various levels of coercion will be addressed. Finally, an attempt will be made to assess what behaviors are actually perceived as sexual harassment by this population. In an attempt to do so, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. A significant portion of students will have experienced some form of sexual harassment by peers or teachers while attending high school.
2. There will be a significant difference between females and males with regard to the frequency of sexually harassing incidents they report.
3. There will be a significant difference between the number of students who report experiencing behaviors that are generally regarded as sexual harassment and those who report that they have been sexually harassed.
4. Less coercive forms of sexual harassment will prove to be more prevalent for both males and females than the more forceful, blatant types.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Subjects consisted of 192 college students (113 female, 79 male) of various ages who presently attend Middle Tennessee State University. The median age of the subjects was 21.5. While the majority of the sample were juniors or seniors enrolled in a psychology or sociology course at the university, 67% held some major other than psychology or sociology. Finally, the students' participation in this study was voluntary and anonymous.

MATERIALS

The Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ; Fitzgerald et al., 1988) is a self-report inventory that was designed to assess the frequency or incidence of various types of sexual harassment. Based on Till's hierarchy (as cited by Fitzgerald et al., 1988), the measure is a 28 item inventory containing statements that assess experiences Involving gender harassment, seductive behavior, sexual bribery, sexual coercion, and sexual assault.

All of the items of the SEQ are written in behavioral terms, and respondents are asked to respond (1) Never, (2) once, or (3) More than once with regard to whether they personally have experienced each behavior that is described.

If the subject responds (2) or (3), he or she is further directed to indicate whether the perpetrator was a man (M), woman (W), or both (B). Scoring is a result of counting the number of subjects who endorse the "Once" or "More than once" response. In addition, it is possible to compute the frequency of harassing experiences for each type of sexual harassment measured. Finally, the actual concept of sexual harassment is addressed in the final question of the instrument. The term itself is not mentioned before this point. This is an attempt at "avoiding the necessity for the respondent to make a subjective judgment as to whether or not (he or) she had been harassed before (he or) she could respond" (Fitzgerald et al., 1988, p. 157).

The authors report adequate internal consistency findings using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (=.92). In addition, test-retest stability was reported to be .86 over a 2-week period (Fitzgerald et al., 1988. Content validity appears to have been achieved by using Till's categories in the construction of the measure. Finally, with the exception of two sexual bribery items and one gender harassment statement, all of the items of the SEQ were positively correlated with the chosen criterion item ("I have been sexually harassed"). Thus, the SEQ appears to be a reliable and valid measure in the assessment of sexual harassment frequencies. The original questionnaire was modified somewhat in order to fully assess incidence rates of high school experiences. A measure was added to determine whether acknowledged harassment came from other students or from teachers. Finally, in addition to the SEQ, various demographic variables were assessed including age, sex, race, classification in college, and major.

PROCEDURE

Students from several courses at the university were administered the inventory by a female

researcher. The students were told that the study reflected a measurement of different sexual behaviors that they may or may not have experienced while enrolled in high school. They were advised to answer the questions as honestly as possible and assured that their responses were strictly anonymous. In addition, the researcher made the students aware of the fact that participation was voluntary. This information was presented via an informed consent form. Each was advised to feel free to terminate the procedure if deemed necessary. The researcher did emphasize however, that it was important that they answer all of the questions if possible. Finally, the printed directions were reinforced for the sake of additional clarity. The entire procedure took approximately 20 minutes. Following the collection of the last questionnaire, the subjects were informed in greater detail regarding the purpose of the study, and they were made aware of how this research is related to previous and future research.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

The data were analyzed to assess the frequency of sexual harassment that males and females experienced in high school. The level of coercion involved in the harassment was also a factor that was considered. Overall, 82% of the subjects involved in the study reported that they had experienced some type of sexually harassing behavior while in high school. When considering males and females separately, 80% of females and 85% of males reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment as stated in the SEQ (Fitzgerald et al., 1988). The relevant proportions for each level of harassment are listed in Table 1. Based on these results, it does appear that males and females are experiencing sexually harassing behaviors while in the high school setting. Since the median age of the sample was 21.5, these results are likely a valid estimate of harassment in the current educational system.

(Insert Table 1 about here)

With regard to the subscales of harassment in the SEQ, the Mantel Haenszel chi square was conducted to test for differences in the frequency of sexual harassment between males and females at the various levels. In addition, independent item analysis was conducted to assess for frequency differences for each question within a subscale. The family-wise alpha level was set to .05 for each subscale, and Dunn's procedure was used to control for the effect of multiple comparisons on the data. The frequency of gender harassment, the least coercive form of sexual harassment, did not differ significantly between males and females, $X^2(1, N=192) = 1.11$, $p > .05$. Two of the individual items in the subscale, however, did display significant differences. Males reported experiencing crudely sexual remarks significantly more often than the females in this sample, $X^2(1, N=192) = 7.47$, $p < .01$. Thirty-seven percent of males as compared to 19% of females reported such behaviors. Females, on the other hand, reported being the subject of leering, ogling, or staring behavior significantly more often than males, $X^2(1, N=192) = 9.26$, $p < .01$. Although 39% of females reported being stared at in an inappropriate, uncomfortable manner, only 14% of males stated that they had ever experienced such a behavior.

Seductive behavior, a somewhat more coercive form of sexual harassment, was then assessed for frequency differences between the sexes. No significant difference was found, $X^2(1, N=192) = 0.10$, $p > .05$. Thus, it appears male and female students experience such behaviors as unwanted sexual attention and discussion of sexual matters at a similar rate.

Sexual bribery was also found to be nonsignificant, $X^2(1, N=192) = 0.01$, $p > .05$, with regard to its frequency of occurrence with males and females. Item analysis did, however, provide a significant result. Males reported being rewarded by a teacher for being socially or sexually cooperative significantly more often than females, $X^2(1, N=192) = 6.70$, $p < .01$. Less than 1% of females, as opposed to 8% of males, stated that they had experienced this behavior.

Finally, neither of the most coercive levels of sexual harassment proved significant. Both sexual coercion, X^2 (1, N=192) = 3.15, $p > .05$, and sexual assault, $X^2(1, N=192)$ 0.54, $p > .05$, failed to show significant differences in the frequency of occurrence for males and females. Thus, for the most coercive behaviors such as sexual threats, punishment, or rape, males and females did not differ significantly.

Next, McNemar's test of dependent proportions (repeated measures chi square) was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in the types of harassment experienced. The resulting chi squares are listed in Table 2. Based on these results, gender harassment was significantly more prevalent than the other, more coercive forms of sexual harassment (seductive behavior, sexual briber, coercion, and sexual assault). While 81% of the total sample experienced gender harassment during their high school career, only 24% reported experiencing behaviors at the level of seductive behavior. Sexual bribery (10%), sexual coercion (6%), and sexual assault (5%) were somewhat less prevalent. Seductive behavior also differed significantly from the other levels of sexual harassment. Of the remaining levels, none differed significantly from one another. Each appeared to occur with similar frequencies. Thus, only gender harassment and seductive behavior occurred significantly more often.

(Insert Table 2 about here.)

Finally, McNemar's test was conducted to assess whether there was a difference between those who admit to experiencing sexually harassing behaviors and those who report being "sexually harassed". Although 82% of the sample reported experiencing some type of sexually harassing behavior, only 11% stated that they had ever been sexually harassed in a high school setting. This difference did prove to be significant, $X^2(1, N=192) = 135.00, p < .05$. Thus, many who reported being confronted with sexually harassing behaviors did not call it "sexual harassment". It may be hypothesized that the 11% who reported experiencing "sexual harassment" had been subjected to the most coercive forms. The largest group of sexual harassment, gender harassment, may not be viewed as such.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The present study intended to provide support for the hypothesis that sexual harassment is indeed a prevalent activity in today's secondary schools. A review of relevant research has led to the finding that very few studies of this type exist. The majority of those that exist fail to address the reliability and validity estimates of the instruments used in their measurements.

It was the goal of this study to assess the frequencies of sexual harassment in high school settings. In addition, more information was sought concerning who was being harassed and what types of harassment were occurring. The results of this study indicated that more than three-fourths of the subjects had experienced some form of sexual harassment. Many, however, apparently did not know that it was classified as such. A significant portion of the students reported experiencing behaviors typically thought of as sexual harassment, yet they denied being "sexually harassed". With regard to differences in the frequency of sexual harassment of the two sexes, no clear difference emerged.

It appears that within this group of subjects, males are being harassed at a similar rate as females. Based on the newly found freedom of males and females to express sexuality, sexual harassment appears to be prevalent in many of the secondary schools. Finally, gender harassment was much more prevalent than any other type of sexual harassment measured in the SEQ. This less coercive form of harassment proved to occur more often than the more forceful forms. It appears that males may experience more verbal types of sexual harassment (sexual remarks and jokes), but females are more likely to experience the more nonverbal behaviors (staring or leering) related to sexual harassment.

These results are very similar to those of previous studies (AAUW, 1993; Popovich et al., 1986; Roscoe et al., 1987). Most research endeavors which have shown less frequent harassment failed to relate statistics concerning reliability and validity data of the questionnaire or only assessed sexual harassment occurring on college campuses. Based on the use of a well researched, reliable instrument, these results are believed to be a valid assessment of sexual harassment.

It appears that sexual harassment remains a frequent occurrence in secondary schools. In addition, in contrast to some other studies, males appear to be the target of harassment as often as females. Thus, school systems need to direct their preventative measures not only to male teachers and female students but also female teachers and male students. Luckily, the less blatant forms of harassment are the more prevalent. Therefore, secondary school systems must educate their teachers, staff, students, and parents that suggestive jokes and remarks, staring and ogling, and treating students differently based on gender are all forms of sexual harassment which can have an impact on one's life. These results provide valuable information that can lead to further development of programs aimed at the education and prevention of sexual harassment.

Further research could be used to assess actual high school aged students with a behaviorally oriented, reliable, and valid measure. The SEQ (Fitzgerald et al., 1988) appears to be such an instrument. Other studies must address the effectiveness of educational programs aimed at such a population. Finally, researchers could assess the characteristics of these male and female

teachers and students who harass, addressing reasons for the harassment and possible solutions.

One limitation of this study lies in the reliance on self-report data for such a sensitive issue. Any time such a reliance is held, there is the potential for overreporting or failing to report actual incidents. This, however, was subverted with the confidentiality and anonymity of the questionnaires. Another limitation of the present study is gaining this self-report regarding high school experiences of sexual harassment from college students. Some interference is possible, for the students may have been confused as to whether events actually occurred in high school, college, or the workplace. In addition, some memories were likely clearer than others. A high school sample would have been beneficial to the study.

Although it would be helpful to address these limitations in future research, the present study is believed to be relevant and desirable based on the lack of appropriate research involving the sexual harassment of high school students. Although some previous research has shown a decline in the prevalence of sexual harassment in high school and other settings, the results of this study indicate that this phenomenon continues to exist in large numbers with this population. It appears to be important to use a behaviorally oriented measure in order to fully assess these rates.

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TABLE I

Proportions of Sexually Harassing Behaviors Experienced at Each Level of Sexual Harassment

	Males	Females	overall
Gender harassment	.85	.79	.81
Seductive behavior	.23	.25	.24
Sexual bribery	.10	.10	.10
Sexual coercion	.03	.09	.06
Sexual assault	.04	.06	.05

Note. Sample size for males=79; Sample size for females=113.

TABLE 2

Pairwise Comparisons Using McNemar's Test to Compare Prevalence on Each Subscale of Harassment

	Seduction	Bribery	Coercion	Assault
Gender	110.00*	137.00*	142.03*	146.00*
Seduction		23.52*	25.13*	36.00*
Bribery			2.88	7.36
Coercion				0.33

Note. Gender = Gender Harassment; Seduction = Seductive Behavior;

Bribery = Sexual Bribery; Coercion = Sexual Coercion; Assault = Sexual Assault

as stated in Fitzgerald's SEQ (1988).

df = 1, N=192 for all X^2 tests. *Significance level .005